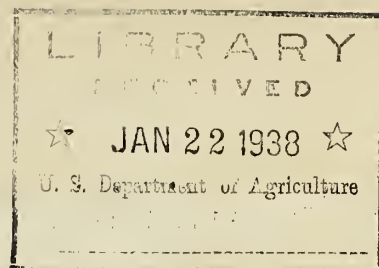


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
H155R

HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR
Washing Winter Woolens



A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Morse Salisbury, Office of Information, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, January 13, 1938.

- - - -

MR. SALISBURY:

Now we'll be hearing first from Ruth Van Deman, reporting for the Bureau of Home Economics. Ruth, what's on your slate?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

So many things, Morse, I think we'll have to turn this into a round table.

MR. SALISBURY:

It won't be the first time - - -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Nor yet the last time, I hope.

MR. SALISBURY:

These the questions?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes sir. That's the pile.

MR. SALISBURY:

All right. The first one reads: Quote. Worried woman wants washing facts on winter woolens.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh yes. That lady sent me a special delivery after she heard our talk about laundry equipment. Her husband was all worked up because his new wool socks were being ruined.

MR. SALISBURY:

Well, what is the answer on that, Ruth?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Our textile people say it's practically impossible to wash woolens without shrinking them some.

MR. SALISBURY:

Some. Not down to half size.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Not if they're handled right. Being very thorough scientists they went into the reasons why. They got out a high-powered microscope and showed me wool fibers before and after washing. Ever look at a wool fiber, Morse, magnified 200 times?

(Over)

MR. SALISBURY:

I don't think I have.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I borrowed these micro-photographs so you could see what they showed me in the laboratory. Look at this fiber of brand new wool.

MR. SALISBURY:

Seems to be covered with little scales.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, when you magnify the outside of a new wool fiber this way, you can see the tiny overlapping scales all over it. They're what give wool its lustre and crimp and elastic quality. Now look at this fiber from wool cloth that's been washed 36 times.

MR. SALISBURY:

No scales at all.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

None.

MR. SALISBURY:

And not clean cut along the edges like the other.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

No it's beginning to break down.

MR. SALISBURY:

What does that do to the cloth?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Makes it stiff and boardy. The fibers mat together. And the cloth won't stretch back to its original shape and size.

MR. SALISBURY:

Like the socks the man was complaining about.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Precisely. And of course a wool fabric all shrunken up like that hasn't much warmth. There aren't the tiny pockets of air between the fibers.

MR. SALISBURY:

On the principle of dead air as an insulator.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Exactly. And the trick in washing wool is to disturb those scales on the fibers just as little as possible.

Very briefly here are the best rules the textile people have found so far:

Use lots of water and lots of soap.

Always have the water lukewarm (not more than 100° F.). And always have the soap thoroughly dissolved in the water to make a good rich suds.

Just to make sure of this with an electric washing machine, it's a good idea to run it for a few minutes before you put wool garments in. Then the soap is certain to be completely dissolved in the water. Then cut the washing time just as short as possible.

Rubbing wool when it's wet strips off the tiny scales on the fibers.

If you're washing woolen things by hand, work the suds through them. Don't rub the way you would on cotton. And don't twist woolens to wring the water out. Squeeze them gently.

And rinse several times, always in the lukewarm water. The idea is to keep the temperature lukewarm all the way through.

So dry woolens in a warm place. That's pretty hard sometimes in winter. But an extreme of heat or cold when wool is wet makes it shrink.

MR. SALISBURY:

Ruth, haven't your textile people recently discovered a new process for sterilizing wool without shrinking it?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes. They've made a very important discovery from the scientific standpoint.

MR. SALISBURY:

So I thought.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

But it involves special chemicals and laboratory technique. It's not for home use, at least not yet.

MR. SALISBURY:

Has commercial possibilities though.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Decidedly. For dry cleaning establishments, and factories, and places like that.

MR. SALISBURY:

Well, Ruth, here's another textile question - cod-liver oil stains.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, that's a tough one. Carbon tetrachloride will take out a cod liver oil stain sometimes. But if the stain is old, it has to be bleached out. It takes our stain removal bulletin to answer that really.

MR. SALISBURY:

That just about tells everything there is to know about taking stains out of fabrics.

Just about.

MR. SALISBURY:

Well, getting along with our round table.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I'm not sure we're going to get all the way around today.

MR. SALISBURY:

Probably not. Anyway this next is headed brass kettle.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh yes. That's good. Read that.

MR. SALISBURY:

This comes from Long Island. Halesite, Long Island. Quote: "Have you any idea of how I can remove wood soot, smoke and dirt from a large brass kettle? It's been used for hog dipping in the past, and now I've bought it and want to clean it and use it in my living room to hold the logs for the fireplace. Is there any acid that will remove the dirt of years from this nice old kettle?"

Were you able to help her out, Ruth?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh yes. More household chemistry.

MR. SALISBURY:

Plus elbow grease -

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes. I warned the lady that it would take a powerful lot of rubbing as well as acid and polish to take off the old tarnish and grime from brass.

The old fashioned way was to use warm vinegar or buttermilk, then polish with rottenstone mixed with oil. The modern brass polishes are made from formulas that combine friction material with acid.

MR. SALISBURY:

With a big piece such as she describes wouldn't it be better to try a mechanical burnisher?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Very likely. I suggested that too.

Anyway I hope she gets that old brass kettle shined up and sitting by her fireplace soon, with plenty of wood in it to burn these winter evenings.

MR. SALISBURY:

Well, Ruth, thank you for letting me sit in on another of your round tables.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Thank you, Morse - here's the laundry bulletin in case you want to quote the numbers and titles.

MR. SALISBURY:

Yes. I think some of our listeners may want to send for this. The title is: Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering, and the number is Farmers' Bulletin 1497.